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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Advance team of United Nations Mission in Haiti is fully operational, Secretary-General reports; coordinates with multinational force in preparation for transition.

+ General Assembly marks twenty-fifth anniversary of UNFPA; grants observer status to International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; concludes International Conference on Families.

+ IAEA Director-General says recent agreement between United States and Democratic People's Republic of Korea appears to foresee vital and prolonged role for Agency; stresses importance of early compliance with Safeguards Agreement.

+ UNPROFOR presence is essential to peace process in Croatia, says Special Representative Akashi; urges parties to reflect on consequences of premature withdrawal.

+ Special Representative Akashi to discuss violations of Mount Igman demilitarized zone and blockage of UNPROFOR fuel convoys with Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb leaders.

+ Canada tells Economic and Financial Committee governments must match UNCED commitments with actions at national and community levels.

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The advance team of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) has been successfully deployed and is now fully operational, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council dated 18 October, he noted that its tasks included: coordinating with the multinational force in preparation for the full deployment of UNMIH; monitoring the operations of the force; and making good offices available as required.

The team had observed that the multinational force had made progress towards achieving objectives set out in Security Council resolution 940 (1994), while using minimum force, the Secretary-General continued. The great

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majority of the Haitian population welcomed the force, but might be developing unrealistically high expectations of what it would do.

In preparation for the transition from the multinational force to UNMIH, the advance team's military component had established a joint working group with the force, he said. The transition could only take place when a secure and stable environment had been established, and when UNMIH's strength and structure were adequate for it to assume its functions. The joint working group was in the process of identifying the criteria for a secure and stable environment. The advance team's tasks would expire when the multinational force had completed its mission and when UNMIH had assumed the full range of its functions.

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The General Assembly today commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In a resolution adopted without a vote, it noted with satisfaction the Fund's positive contribution in promoting understanding and awareness of population and development issues. Addressing the Assembly, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali said the UNFPA must continue to encourage societies to develop population policies, while respecting their traditions and diversity. It must also be prepared for controversy. He stressed that the international community must follow through on the commitments made at the Cairo Conference on Population and Development.

The Assembly yesterday granted observer status to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in consideration of its role in international humanitarian relations. In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly recalled that the Federation's member societies were recognized by their governments as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. Introducing the resolution, Australia cited the Federation's uniqueness and shared humanitarian task with the United Nations. The United States said it would have abstained had there been a vote; observer status should be granted in accordance with the Charter and past practice, which limited it to States and intergovernmental organizations.

Also yesterday, the Assembly concluded its International Conference on Families. Pakistan urged Member States, when finalizing proposals for the follow-up to the International Year of the Family, to make provision for the return and rehabilitation of families victimized during armed conflicts and civil strife. Mongolia said traditional definitions of the family were being enriched with the emergence of new types, such as cohabitation, same-gender relationships and single-parent families.

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The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) today said that the agreement reached by the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Geneva this week appeared to foresee a "vital, prolonged and extensive" role for the Agency. However, he stressed that it would have to be studied in detail when finalized.

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The agreement also foresaw a freezing of the present nuclear programme of the People's Republic and a subsequent dismantling of installations, calling for new IAEA verification responsibilites beyond those required by the Safeguards Agreement, Mr. Bilx continued. The disagreement between the People's Republic and the IAEA had been caused by the country's refusal to cooperate in the verification of its declared nuclear inventory. Under the Geneva agreement, the country would commit itself to accepting such verification once a significant portion of the light water reactor project agreed with the United States had been completed.

Mr. Blix welcomed that commitment, but warned that there could be a further significant delay before full compliance with the Safeguards Agreement could be attained. It was in the interest of all concerned that such a delay be avoided and that the People's Republic accept early verification of its nuclear inventory as required by the Safeguards Agreement.

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The Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, today said that the presence of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia was essential to the peace process there. He noted that the Zagreb Agreement of 29 March had silenced the guns and brought genuine relief to people on both sides of the conflict for the first time since the war had begun. The Security Council had recently renewed UNPROFOR's mandate to provide a secure environment in which a political settlement could be reached, while the international community's diplomatic efforts had intensified.

However, Mr. Akashi continued, UNPROFOR could only play its essential role in Croatia if it were welcome. He urged the parties to the conflict and the Croatian people to reflect on the consequences of a premature withdrawal of a peace-keeping force which had the solid endorsement of the international community.

Mr. Akashi recalled that Security Council resolution 947 (1994) requested the Secretary-General to report by 20 January 1995 on progress towards the reopening of road and rail communications between the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) and the rest of Croatia; the establishment of basic utilities; and the return of displaced persons in safety and dignity. He stressed that UNPROFOR would do its utmost to ensure that all the provisions of that resolution were implemented.

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Special Representative Akashi will travel to Sarajevo tomorrow, and then on to Pale, for two days of talks with Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb leaders, according to a United Nations spokesman. He will be joined by the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lieutenant-General Michael Rose. On the agenda will be the removal of some 500 Bosnian Government troops from the Mount Igman demilitarized zone; the blocking of UNPROFOR fuel convoys by Bosnian Serbs; and a shooting incident in Gorazde earlier this week.

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The Bosnian Serbs have been demanding a portion of UNPROFOR's fuel supplies in exchange for safe passage for the convoys, but the Force has catergorically refused to meet those demands, according to the spokesman. However, he warned that fuel shortages could threaten its patrolling ability.

Meanwhile, good weather and adequate security conditions have enabled the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to average 15 flights a day into Sarajevo in the last week. Meanwhile, the UNHCR has transported 300 metric tons of food into the city by road.

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Governments must match their commitments to follow up the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) with actions at the national and community levels, Canada's representative told the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) today. As the Committee continued its consideration of the question of environment and sustainable development, he said Canada had made progress because it had set clear goals, standards and measures.

Regarding the functions of the Commission on Sustainable Development, New Zealand stressed the importance of streamlining national reporting requirements. In view of the Commission's function as a clearing house, a coordinated approach to issues of environment and development at international and national levels was imperative.

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